

APPENDIX
AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

Claim 1 (Previously presented): An isolated avian hepatitis E virus having the nucleotide sequence set forth in SEQ ID NO:1 or its complementary strand.

Claim 2 (Canceled).

Claim 3 (Currently amended): An isolated polynucleotide comprising a member selected from the group consisting of:

—— (a) the nucleotide sequence set forth in SEQ ID NO:1 or its complementary strand; and

—— (b) a polynucleotide which hybridizes to the nucleotide sequence set forth in SEQ ID NO:1.

Claims 4 and 5 (Canceled).

Claim 6 (Currently amended): An immunogenic composition comprising a nontoxic, physiologically acceptable carrier and a member selected from the group consisting of:

(a) an isolated avian hepatitis E virus having the nucleotide sequence set forth in SEQ ID NO:1 or its complementary strand; and or (b) the an isolated polynucleotide according to Claim 3 nucleotide sequence set forth in SEQ ID NO:1 or its complementary strand.

Claims 7-13 (Canceled).

Claim 14 (Currently amended): A method for propagating[[,]] or inactivating or attenuating a hepatitis E virus having the nucleotide sequence set forth in SEQ ID NO:1 or its complementary strand comprising inoculating an embryonated chicken egg with a live, pathogenic hepatitis E virus, recovering the live, pathogenic hepatitis E virus and optionally taking an additional step of inactivating the live, pathogenic virus or serially

~~passing the pathogenic virus through additional embryonated chicken eggs until said virus is rendered attenuated.~~

Claim 15 (Original): The method according to Claim 14, wherein the live, pathogenic hepatitis E virus is injected intravenously into the embryonated chicken egg.

Claims 16-18 (Canceled).

Claim 19 (Previously presented): A method for detecting an avian hepatitis E viral nucleic acid sequence having the nucleotide sequence set forth in SEQ ID NO:1 or its complementary strand in an avian or mammalian species comprising isolating nucleic acid from the avian or mammalian species, hybridizing the isolated nucleic acid with a suitable nucleic acid probe or oligonucleotide primer consisting of SEQ ID NO:1 or its complementary strand and detecting the presence of a hybridized probe complex as an indication of the presence of the avian hepatitis E viral nucleic acid.

Claim 20 (Previously presented): The method according to Claim 19, wherein the isolated nucleic acid is hybridized with a radio-labeled or a non-radiolabeled nucleic acid probe or hybridized with a pair of oligonucleotide primers and further amplified in a polymerase chain reaction.